MR. CHAIRMAN: Secretary-General will convey to the members of the bereaved families our sense of profound sorrow and deep sympathy.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 1.

SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN: Sir, let the Prime Minister reintroduce all the Ministers because some of them have resigned. We do not know who is still in the Cabinet. We do not know who the Ministers are. (*Interruptions*). Sir, they are all strangers including himself. He has got to reintroduce himself. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI MOHINDER SINGH LATHER: Question No. 1.

श्री सुरेन्द्रजीत सिंह अहलुवालिया : सभापति महोदय, जरा पाकिस्तान में जो कुछ हो रहा है उसके बारे में प्रधान मंत्री महोदय कुछ बताने की कृपा करेंगे? पाकिस्तान में जनतांत्रिक अधिकारों को हटा दिया गया है और वहां एक चुनी-चुनाई सरकार को डिसमिस कर के एक मिलिट्री शासन लागू किया जा रहा है उसके बारे में कुछ बतायेंगे?

SHRI P. UPENDRA: No, no. Your leader had changed scores of Ministers and hundreds of Chief Ministers during the last five years. Did you discuss it? Is it relevant, Sir?

डा० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय :... (व्यवधान) ... पाकिस्तान कहां है। ... **(व्यवधान)** इसके बाद एक्शन बेस्ड पालिटिक्स करके देवी लाल को अपनी कैबिनेट से निकाला। उसके बाद रिएक्शन हुआ, रिएक्शन के बाद प्रधान मंत्री जो डिक्लेयर करेंगे और इस देश को उसी हालत में ला देंगे जिस हालत में पाकिस्तान है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is Question Hour. I have called Question No. 1. Nobody is answering it. Mr. Lather has put the question. (*Interruptions*) Question No. 1.

SHRI S. S. AHLUWLIA: No Minister is replying to the question. (*Interruption*).

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Who is the Minister?

श्री सुरेन्द्रजीत सिंह अहलुवालिया : पाकिस्तान के बारे में क्या कुछ कहेंगे, वहां रोज इमिसरीज भेजे जा रहे हैं!

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 1.

Reconstruction of Semi-conductor Complex Ltd. at Chandigarh

*1. SHRI MOHINDER SINGH LATHER:†

DR. BAPU KALDATE:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Chandigarh based Semi-conductor Complex Ltd., the only semi-conductor facility in the country, was destroyed in a fire in February, 1989;

(b) whether it is also a fact that reconstruction of the project has not been taken up so far even after a lapse of more than a year and a half;

(c) if so, what are the reasons for the delay in taking up the reconstruction of the project; and

(d) to what extent the reconstruction cost is likely to escalate due to delay in taking up the work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (PROF. M. G. K. MENON): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Mohinder Singh Lather.

Statement

(a) In addtion to Semi-conductor Complex Limited, there are other facilities in the country with different types of techniques and levels of sophistication in the area of semi-conductors. The fire at Semi-conductor Complex Limited (SCL), SAS Nagar, Punjab in February, 1989 destroyed the LSI/VLSI Chips manufacturing as also process R&D facilities; the computer aided design and part of the modules and sub-systems facilities were unaffected.

(b) and (c) It has been decided to re-build the Semi-conductor Complex Limited with 6" State-of-art production facility and take up research and development activities. Work on reconstruction is in progress. Trial production of VLSI at SCL is scheduled to commence within a period of 30 months.

(d) There has been no delay in starting reconstruction work after Government's decision.

SHRI MOHINDER SINGH LATHER: My first supplementary is whether any inquiry was conducted as to the cause of fire and the losses suffered. (*Interruptions*).

PROF. M. G. K. MENON: As already stated in the reply the Semiconductor Complex at Chandigarh was burnt down in February, 1989 This affected the water fabrication facility and part of the research and development facility in February, 1989. We have pointed out that the Government has already taken a decision to reconstruct the Complex and the reconstruction work is fully in progress at the present moment.

SHRI MOHINDER SINGH LATHER: Sir, this is not my supplementary. I have asked whether any inquiry was conducted as to the cause of fire and the losses suffered. This is my first query.

PROF. M. G. K. MENON: Sir, a significant part of the Supplementary was drowned in the noise. As far as the inquiry is concerned, it was certainly conducted. It was conducted by a committee headed by Maj.—Gen. Mohile and it included another officer who was also earlier the Director of the Defence Institute for Fire Research of DRDO. The study has clearly brought out that as far as one can make out, it was an accidental fire. With regard to the damage which has been suffered we have the details concerning buildings and equipment destroyed or damaged and the financial loss; in general as I said, the damage was in the wafer fabrication facility and a part of the research and development area.

SHRI MOHINDER SINGH LATHER: My second supplementary is whether the Government is considering putting up of such complexes in other parts of the country so that we can be self-sufficient and can save foreign exchange.

PROF. M. G. K. MENON: SCL is clearly a unique facility. As far as the area of micro-electronics is concerned, there are several facilities which already exist in various parts of the country. There is, for example, the facility of Bharat Electronics in Bangalore. In the private sector, there is a major facility of SPIC at Maraimalai Nagar in Madras. I can give a list of many others which exist. As you know, the area of micro-electronics covers a very wide range from simple transistors right up to very large-scale intergrated circuits. SCL is a unique facility in the sense that here one is concerned with circuits of very high complexity. What we are aiming at in the reconstructed Semi-conductor Complex are geometries which correspond to 0.8 microns. These are indeed very large scale integrated circuits called VLSIs. In view of the very large investments involved and highly skilled personnel needed, one does not propose to put up several such facilities in India. In fact, what we would like to see is that the one which we have and which will now be reconstructed at Chandigarh is fully operational and fully loaded.

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I remember the kind of resistance that was there when this facility was put up, from the traders' lobby in India as well as from the U.S. trade partners. There was a tremendous amount of problems in getting technology first for the LSI and then for the VLSI. We got the technology and we set up the facility and the main persons upset were the smugglers. They were very upset that for the first time chips were available at a very very reasonable rate within the country. Sir, the import of the question of Mr. Lather was basically missed. The smugglers' lobby had arranged the sabotage of this plant. I have gone and inspected the plant when it was burnt. I was invited and I went and saw it. It was a state-of-the-art building with all fire-fighting facilities and with all kinds of fail-safe programmes built into it. There were all kinds of partitions. If the thing had to catch fire, there were particular areas which could have caught fire. But in this particular case, the entire plant was gutted. I went and saw it after it was burnt. The entire plant was gutted and that is why the Government had wanted an inquiry into it -as to what the reason was and who the people are who are involved in this sabotage. It was a real case of sabotage by smugglers. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what the fate of that inquiry is, what the fate of police inquiry is, what the fate of the Central Government inquiry is and what the action is which is being taken on that. Thank you, Sir.

PROF. M. G. K. MENON: Sir, as I have mentioned earlier in reply to the first supplementary itself, we did have an inquiry conducted which was done by a committee which was chaired by Major-General Mohile. I would like to read out the basic conclusions of this particular Committee because the points made by the hon. Member are certainly valid in the sense that this particular facility was a state-of-the-art facility as far as semi-conductor production was concerned. But the conclusions indicate that from the angle of fire precautions, as we know if to be the case for many, many buildings, there was a certain lack of appropriate care. The conclusion essentially was and I quote: "The tragedy would not have taken the devastating stage if the following precautions were taken. The steel structural members should have been given protective coating against the excess heat, as per international standard; combustible material like Hessian cloth, thermacole, bitumen etc. should not have been used in air-conditioning and air-handling units. The P.V.C. coated cables should have been provided "fire stops or protective covering..." and so on. I will not read out the entire conclusions of this Report and take up the time of the House. Further, the Report stated and I quote; "The fire started in most unimportant room situated at one corner. From the study of the overall situation, considering the nature of the fire and the way it started, it could be inferred that this does not appear to be a case of sabotage." Suggestions for future improvements in the proposed building could not be given by the Board of Inquiry as that would require a detailed study of civil construction designs and so on. There was a further inquiry into the question of possible sabotage. This looked into questions of what materials were found in the burnt out areas; there was no evidence of any item which would suggest that it was a case of sabotage. So, other than statements made that this could be a case of sabotage, there is no evidence from the report of the two committees, and from the evidence of the witnesses that these committees summoned that it was a case of sabotage.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Was there any police inquiry also? That is what he wanted to know.

PROF. M. G. K. MENON: The police inquiry did not take place. I am given to understand that the previous Government had referred it to the CBI which did not handle it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It was referred to CBI.

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH: Sir, was somebody punished for the problem? I want to know this because according to the statement of the Minister, there were all sorts of designs faults. I would like to know from the hon. Minister: were the people the committee and the individuals who are responsible for introducing those design faults punished? Have they been punished? Are they going to the punished?

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: The Minister himself at that time was responsible for that . . . (*Interruptions*) . . .

PROF. M. G. K. MENON: Sir, first of all; I would like to object to that statement. I certainly had nothing to do with the semi-conductor complex at the time the fire took place... (*Interruptions*)... If the remark as made refers to the earlier Minister in charge, that is a matter of interpretation. But as par as the first part of the question raised by the previous Member is concerned, I can only read out what the Committee has said:

> "From the evidence collected, it is not possible to pin-point the responsibility of fire on any individual or group of people. This could be considered as an unfortunate case of pure accident."

Though, of course, as I have read out to you, Sir, they have indicated... (*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: There was negligence but they could not pin-point it.

PROF. M. G. K. MENON: Exactly, Sir... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH: It was also made by consensus, Sir. Who was responsible or that? ...(*Interruptions*)...

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): We have to start from the then Minister... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: You were also in the Government at that time...

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: Certainly. Finance and Defence were concerned with it.

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH: The honourable Prime Minister is casting aspersions on my friend, the Raja of Padrauna, Mr. C. P. N. Singh who expired, who was the Minister at that time. And the Prime Minister is casting aspersions on my dead friend. That is why I am getting upset. Shameful.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Ever since this Government came into power, there has been one fire after another, Vigyan Bhavan, Krishi Bhavan, this fire now, and even this Government is on fire just now. And like the semi-conductor complex, they have design difficulties in this Government. It is after being gutted. The Minister has said it has been possible to rebuild the semi-conductor complex. I would like to know from the Minister whether he is aware that at the time this decision has taken originally to build this semi-conductor complex, the experts had recommended that Tambaram near Madras was the ideal site for it. But due to the weak Tamil political leadership . . .

SHRI TINDIVANAM G. VENKATRAMAN: What is it? Why is he bringing in the Tamil Nadu Government here? What has it to do with this?

SHRI G. SWAMINATHAN: The Question Hour should not be used for politics.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: I am myself a Tamilian. What is wrong? I also plead guilty. (*Interrup-*

tions) I don't mind. That means I am objective. Therefore, I would like to know in view of the then experts' recommendation whether the rebuilding would be done by shifting the semi-conductor complex to Tambaram near Madras.

PROF. M. G. K. MENON: I would like to give a categorical answer that there is no intention of shifting the semi-conductor complex. A basic decision was taken long ago to set it up at Chandigarh; and it was set up there. It was a first rate facility. There was this unfortunate accident. The present Government has taken a decision to reconstruct it. Reconstruction work has started. But apart from the area and facilities damaged by the fire, the semi-conductor complex has a lot of other facilities and infrastructure the honourable Member may like to go to visit these things which are existing there and which are functional and important for the future of this undertaking.

PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR: This question leads to some wider issues. The Prime Minister is here. So I am taking advantage of his presence to ask whether this Government functions by consensus. So far as the industrial policy is concerned, there is a lack of consensus. Within the ruling party and to the extent that this question relates to a unit in the industry, particularly in an industry which is in the priority sector, the microelectronics industry, and it has to be a public sector company, in view of the fact that there is a total confusion with regard to the state of the industrial policy...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Put a supplementary, a question that arises out of the main question.

PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR: This is the background. I am trying to ask a question. Will the Government clarify its position with regard to the electronics policy in this country and as a result, the fate of this conductor unit? Secondly, will the Government clarify that the public sector will continue to remain a dominant segment of the industrial policy in this country? With reference to Prof. Subramanian Swamy's question, in view of the fact that the Government is not able to control the Punjab situation, there is a grave risk that this second unit which is critical to the microelectronic industry may be subjected to all kinds of sabotage. So, will the Government consider shifting to a more secure place?

AN HON. MEMBER: The Bihar?... (*Interruptions*) . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Because of the disturbed conditions in Punjab, would you like to shift it elsewhere? That is his question.

PROF. M. G. K. MENON: The question has been answered already. Sir, when I said that the Semi-conductor complex is under reconstruction as a state-of-art facility and will not be shifted from Chandigarh. Also apart from the Semi-Conductor Complex there are many other facilities in Punjab in areas of high technology; these are functioning and there has been no problem with them as such. And, Sir, this is a major industrial unit on which we have invested significantly. It has been functioned and got off to a good start. There is no indication that there was any sabotage. Such accidents can happen anywhere else in the facility reconstructed and upgraded this where it is. It is a Unit in the public sector as it is a unique national strategic facility.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Viren J. Shah.

SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Sir, the semi-conductor industry has become now a multi-billion-dollar industry, not multi-million, but multi-billion, industry and during the last ten years or so, several countries of South Asia, whether it is a Hong Kong or Taiwan or Malaysia or Indonesia or Singapore, have tremendously benefited by it in uplifting their economy and also in

earning a great amount of foreign exchange. Is there any proposal because the honourable Minister has said in an earlier reply— to have apart from this Complex, another one? I would like to know whether they have any desire to set up another one. What are the plans to develop the semi-conductor industry within the shortest time in such a manner that this country also can bennefit economically and also can acquire scientific thinking? Are there concrete plans to develop the semi-conductor industry in the country?

PROF. M. G. K. MENON: Sir, we are fully aware that the micro-electronics industry represents, in fact, the base of modern electronics telecommunications. We also have facilities in the country in various areas of micro electronics. When this particular Semi-Conductor Complex is rebuilt, it will be for in its own area of operations a state-of-the-art production cum R & D facility. I would like to continue to answer the point raised by the honourable Member. As far as micro-electronics as a whole is concerned, we are having very detailed discussions on how to provide the maximum incentives, not only for indigenous units to produce items in this area but also to others, such as foreign companies and non-resident companies from abroad, who may wish to come into the country. We will not change the basic principles underlying our policies, rules and regulations but within these provide them the maximum incentives which may have to be worked out with reference to the special requirements of this sector and in compassion with what obtains elsewhere in the world.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 2.

Representation to employees on Kendriya Vidayalaya Sangathan and its Board of Governors

*2. SHRIMATI BIJOYA CHAKRAVARTY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 382 given on the Rajya Sabha on the 29th May, 1990 and state:

(a) whether representation to employees on Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and its Board of Governors has since been provided;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, whether the matter is being included in the agenda of the meeting of the Board of Governors Scheduled for August 1990; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHAMANBHAI MEHTA): (a) to (c) The Rules of the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan do not provide for representation of employees either on Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan or its Board of Governors. However, the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan has set up Joint Consultative Machinery to discuss matters relatng to the conditions of service and work, welfare of the employees and improvement in efficiency and standard of work. The question of representation of employees on the Sangathan is being examined and the matter will be considered by the Board of Governors in its forthcoming meeting scheduled for 22-8-1991.

SHRIMATI BIJOY CHAKRAVARTY: Sir, to accord the greatest representation to the employees' organisations on the executive bodies of the educational organisations like the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan is an accepted thing and this is a nationally accepted principle. However, the previous Government completely turned a deaf year to this. I personally approached the then Ministers, Shrimati Sheila Kaul, Shrimati Shahi, etc., but to no avail. As the National Front Government adopted this proposal as part of its manifesto, I would like to ask the honourable Minister why, like his predecessors, he also is not accepting the demand of the teachers. In reply